



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE INVESTIGATION LEADS TO 40-MONTH FEDERAL PRISON SENTENCE FOR YONKERS MAN IN SCHEME TO EXPORT ARMS TO THE PHILIPPINES

NEW YORK—Martin D. Ficke, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Michael Garcia, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York (SDNY), announced that FERNANDO SERO, 40, of Yonkers, was sentenced today in White Plains federal court by United States District Judge CHARLES L. BRIEANT to 40 months in prison for shipping U.S. defense articles, including weapons and weapons parts, to the Island of Mindanao in the Southern Philippines in violation of the Arms Export Control Act.

According to court papers, SERO illegally shipped items -- classified as "defense articles" by the U.S. State Department -- to the Philippines on numerous occasions over a three-year period. Four of those shipments were intercepted in September 2003 and March 2005 and contained assault rifles, including AR-15s, AK-47s, M-16s, G-3s and HK-94s, along with other weapons parts and ammunition.

SERO purchased the weapons in the United States and then smuggled them to Mindanao in sealed containers by falsifying shipping documents, according to court papers. In some instances, the weapons parts were concealed and commingled within boxes containing household goods such as a light fixture and an electric car cooler. When they arrived in Mindanao, the weapons were reassembled and sold at a substantial profit, according to court papers.

Mr. Ficke praised the efforts of Assistant U.S. Attorney Perry Carbone, and thanked the ICE foreign Attaché in Manila, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Philippine National Police for their cooperation and assistance in the investigation.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.